

S. 3660, the Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act

Introduced by Senators Casey, Jones, Wyden, Harris, Kaine and Brown

While Congress has taken important initial steps to respond to COVID-19, we are only beginning to understand the broader societal implications of the pandemic. Research by the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC suggests that stress from the 2008 recession led to an increase in child abuse, and the current crisis combines the stress of an economic downturn with that of a public health emergency.¹ Further, as millions of Americans are sheltering in place, children are not as frequently in contact with the teachers, doctors or counselors who might flag potential cases of abuse. This heightens the need for services from government and non-profit organizations that can help children and strengthen families as they deal with adversity. However, those organizations face unique challenges from the pandemic, including the risk posed by conducting home visits and the expenses involved with investing in new technology for virtual visits.

S. 3660 will provide significant, new emergency funding to help at-risk children and families. It will provide \$500 million for child protective services through the the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) state grant program. This money will be flexible and available for a range of emergency uses, including investments in technology, personal protective equipment for caseworkers and emergency supports for children and families, such as food, cleaning supplies and diapers. The Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act will also include an extra \$1 billion for CAPTA's Community Based Child Abuse Prevention program, which will go to organizations that work on the ground to prevent abuse by strengthening families that are under stress. This money will also be flexible and available to expand services from those organizations, bolster state helplines and help families with their health and material needs.

As we learn more about the new coronavirus, it is increasingly clear that our Nation has a long fight ahead of it. We must take every step necessary to shore up our communities and safeguard the wellbeing of children and families. The Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act will bolster state and local efforts to accomplish this at a time when it is a critical necessity.

Endorsements

The National Child Abuse Coalition
Zero to Three

Cosponsorship

To cosponsor the Emergency Funding for Child Protection Act, please contact Doug Hartman with Senator Bob Casey's office at Doug_Hartman@help.senate.gov.

¹ <https://www.chp.edu/news/050110-child-abuse-increased>